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News From Our Local Churches - March



First Congregational Church, Birmingham, Welcomes Rev. Black

Traditionally, First Congregational Church of Birmingham designates the last Sunday in February, **African Heritage Sunday**. Congregants assemble attired in African attire for Sunday morning worship service. This year the church was honored to have had as its speaker the **Rev. Geoffrey Black**, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. Addressing the sermon title "**A History of Connecting the Dots**," he related the progression of events from the Old Testament Exodus, to Jesus' reference to "proclaim release to the captives"



Negro spiritual and finally modern gospel music.

(Luke 4: 18) in the New Testament, to the nineteenth century antislavery movement and liberation of the slaves, and finally to the current racial climate in the United States. The youth fellowship of the church extended the theme by connecting in song and drama the slave work song with the



UCC News

UCC Newsroom

Headlines from the United Church of Christ

New report examines impact of recession on congregational vitality

The 2008 recession extended a decade-long erosion of the financial health of American congregations, with just 14 percent of the 11,077 randomly sampled congregations saying in 2010 that their financial health is excellent.

Southeast Conference FAQ's

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On the Saturday preceding the observance, a colloquy led by the Rev. Black brought together pastors, members, and visitors from around the state of Alabama. Included among the guests were representatives from Beloved Community Church. First Congregational Church of Athens. First Congregational

Community Church, First Congregational Church of Atlanta, First Congregational Church of Talladega, Pilgrim Congregational Church of Birmingham and Covenant Community Church of Birmingham, a congregation seeking to become a part of the United Church of Christ. The General Minister opened by citing four objectives of this Synod year. He then identified the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, radical inclusiveness, and changing lives. The lively question and answer period that followed elicited information and ideas from both the speaker and the audience.

The events of the weekend provided an appropriate culmination of the celebration of **Black History Month**. Click through the slide show to see some of the outstanding garments worn on African Heritage Sunday.

Prayers for Japan

John Gill, pastor of **Church of the Savior, Knoxville, TN**, has written a prayer for Japan in the wake of recent disasters which is available on the UCC website. [Follow link to read prayers for Japan.](#)

We join in offering prayers and financial support to the survivors and those who minister with them. [Follow link to read how you can help.](#)



The Women of Central Congregation Lunch and Learn

On March 2, 2011, the Women's Group at **Central Congregation UCC, Atlanta**,

held a fellowship luncheon followed by a presentation on the Washington D.C. Immersion trip (September, 2010.) One of the participants, Mary Ellen Myers, shared with the group her experience on the trip, raising awareness for the U.S. Empire viewed through the Book of Revelations.



Friends and Family Sunday

Rush Memorial Congregational UCC, 150

James P. Brawley Atlanta, GA will celebrate Friends and Family Sunday, April 10, 2011 11:00 am. Their special guests will be Pastor Artis Johnson and the members of Evergreen Congregational Church from Beachton, GA. A dinner will be served following service.

143rd Church Anniversary / Homecoming

First Congregational Church, Talladega, AL, will celebrate their 143rd Church Anniversary/Homecoming and Church Dedicatory Services as an Alabama Historical Landmark, Sunday, morning, May 15, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. The featured speaker at the anniversary of First Congregational Talladega is Dr. Arthur Price, Pastor of the 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham. The church will unveil their church's Alabama Historical Landmark sign at this time.

TAP Group In Progress with Final Course

The **Talladega TAP Group** is taking its last TAP course "Capstone Course: Christian Ethics and a Life of Meaning." Rev. Bud Precise is the facilitator. The group will graduate in August 2011.





Link here to read article on Charmaine - **Theology Among the People (TAP) Graduates – Where Are They Now?**

Charmaine Johnson, member of Victory Church, Stone Mountain, GA and TAP graduate has been selected

to attend the **Middle East Travel Seminar**. Charmaine is a Candler student on tract for 2012 graduation with an MDiv degree. The Middle East Travel Seminar (METS) is an annual event that involves students from the following protestant seminaries; Candler School of Theology of Emory University (Atlanta, GA), Columbia Theological Seminary (Decatur, GA), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY), The Divinity School of Duke University (Durham, NC), Emmanuel School of Religion (Johnson City, TN), McAfee School of Theology (Atlanta, GA; 1997 and following).

Thirty students are selected from these seminaries each year to participate in the METS experience. The main criterion for selection is promise of leadership in their respective denominations. Along with the seminarians, ten non-seminarians are selected who also are recognized as leaders in various professions, government and the arts.

The center piece of the program is a three-week trip through Syria, Jordan, Sinai, Israel, and Greece. It is funded by the Pittulloch Foundation, with additional support from the Fraser-Parker Foundation, and the Cully A. and Lois Dowdle Cobb Foundation. Approximately eight hundred and thirty people have participated in this program since it was initiated in 1980. **Follow link for more information on the program.**

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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